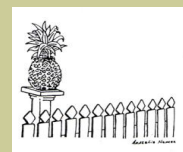


Saxe Gotha Dispatch



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Museum's Annual Christmas Open House

The staff of the Lexington County Museum and the Friends of the Lexington County Museum invite you to come experience Christmas traditions of the past at the Museum as it hosts its Annual Christmas Open House on December 14th from 1 pm to 4 pm. Many of the thirty historic structures on the Museum complex will be open and will feature period Christmas decorations. The event is **free** to the public! Light refreshments that would have been eaten by Lexington residents in the 19th century, including hot apple cider and gingerbread, will be served. Friends member Constance Caractor Flemming will be singing and playing live music in the John Fox House. A blacksmith will also be on



John Fox House decorated in period fashion

site practicing his craft and educating visitors as well.

The Christmas Open House is a great way to explore the museum's structures and collections on your own time, learn about the rich history of the county, and get into the Christmas spirit.

This event will also

feature a small unveiling ceremony for the newly created Southern Lutheran Seminary historic marker.

For more information, call the museum at 803-359-8369 or visit our webpage at www.lex-co.sc.gov/museum. Come join us for this great event!

Museum Past and Upcoming Outreach Efforts

Museum staff members have been busy trying to increase the visibility of the museum and Lexington County history through public programs. Museum staff members have given presentations

to the Dutch Fork Genealogical Society and the Columbia Antique Study Guild. We also gave a tour to a class from the Shepherd's Center in Lexington.

If you would like museum staff members to speak to a group you are a part of, please don't hesitate to call and us.

Christmas Traditions of Antebellum Lexington District

"Trees were common decorations in homes as they were the European symbol of life. Cedar trees were popular as were red-berried holly trees. They would have been brought into the house on Christmas Eve and decorated with small candles, strings of beads or popcorn, and gingerbread men."

Christmas traditions in pre-1860 Lexington were a little different than what they are today. For farming families, late December was a time for cleaning up after the harvest and preparing for the rest of the season.

They had an abundance of food supplies on hand and the smokehouses were stocked with freshly smoked ham and other pork products. The livestock were well-fed and ready to be butchered. They would most likely have had some extra money in hand from selling their marketable crops and livestock. They would have bought luxuries such as sugar, coffee, spices, oranges, and coconuts for use in the holiday feast.

December days were also good for clearing new fields and for cleaning up brush along fence rows. This provided kindling and wood for fires and also trimmings of greenery such as holly. Bonfires were common at Christmas time as the days were short and farmers burned excess brush. Europeans also celebrated Christmas with bonfires as

a way of dispelling the darkness and welcoming the Christ Child. Also common on Christmas Eve was the firing of shotguns. This tradition is mentioned in Edwin Scott's "Random Recollections of a Long Life" originally published in 1884 but reflecting on memories from the 1820s-30s.

Families would visit each other during the season and since traveling even short distances was very difficult, the visits would often last several days. These days and nights would be filled with feasting and gathering around the fire,

Trees were common decorations in homes as they were the European symbol of life. Cedar trees were popular as were red-berried holly trees. They would have been brought into the house on Christmas Eve and decorated with small candles, strings of beads or popcorn, and gingerbread men. Often thorny bushes or sparkleberry branches were cut and decorated by affixing candied fruit onto

their points. This practice has evolved into creating gumdrop trees. Gingerbread cookies in all kinds of meaningful shapes were often given as gifts to family, friends and acquaintances. The pinnacle of the celebration of Christmas for most Christians would have been attending Midnight Christmas Eve services at their church. That night, the children would have hung their stockings (socks) from the mantle of the fireplace. They would awaken the next morning to gifts. These gifts mostly consisted of fruit, cookies, homemade gifts or small toys that could fit into the stockings. Other small gifts may have been placed in and around the tree branches.

At the Lexington County Museum we enjoy interpreting many of these old Christmas traditions. The Friends of the Museum will be decorating some of the houses in the traditional manner and visitors will be able to see the houses in their Christmas splendor at our Open House on December 14th and during regular tours from the 16th through the 21st.

Haunted History Halloween Program a Great Success

We would like to thank everyone who came out to our Haunted History Halloween program and those who volunteered as well. More than 110 people came out on the evenings of October 16 and 17 to learn a little about Lexington County

history and to meet some of the ghosts, specters, and haints who took over those nights. Visitors learned about the exploits of the outlaw "Black" Luke Manning and about the way Sheriff Amos Banks handled those County residents who had too

much to drink. Attendees also heard about 19th century medical remedies. Check out our Facebook page to see more photos from the event. Be sure to catch next year's exciting Halloween program!



Friends Annual Fundraiser to Commemorate Sherman's March

The Friends of the Lexington County Museum will host its annual fundraiser on Saturday January 24, 2015 from 6 to 10 pm at Lexington's Town Hall, located at 111 Maiden Lane in downtown Lexington. This event will allow attendees to reflect on the damages and changes caused by General William T. Sherman's March through Lexington County 150 years ago. Artifacts related to the Civil War from the museum's collections will be on display as well.

Tickets for this evening of history and entertainment are \$50 and can be purchased from the museum or at the door on the 24th. The price includes hors d'oeuvres, dinner, and drinks as well as the music of the Great Society Band. Sponsorships ranging from \$150 to \$2500 are available and are tax-deductible. The fundraiser will also feature a silent auction. All funds raised go toward the restoration of the Fox House and Corley House roof and the enhancement of exhibits. For more information, call the museum at 803-359-8369 or visit the museum's website at www.lex-co.sc.gov/museum.



Museum Visitation in September and October 2014

With the ending of summer, the museum's school visitation picks up. The museum has been filled with children almost every weekday morning for the past two months.

In September, 910 visitors

came to the museum, including visitors from nine states and the United Kingdom. In October, the museum saw 2,451 visitors. Visitors came from fifteen states as well as Germany and Japan.

The museum saw school groups from Lexington, Richland, Aiken, Florence, and Barnwell Counties. These groups came from public schools, home school groups, scout groups, and after school programs.



Museum Calendar of Events

December 14 – Annual Christmas Open House

1 pm to 4 pm

Free to the Public

Refreshments will be served

Lexington County Museum Complex

January 24 – “Remembering Sherman’s Burning of Lexington 150 Years Ago” Fundraiser

6 pm to 10 pm

\$50 per ticket

All you can eat and drink

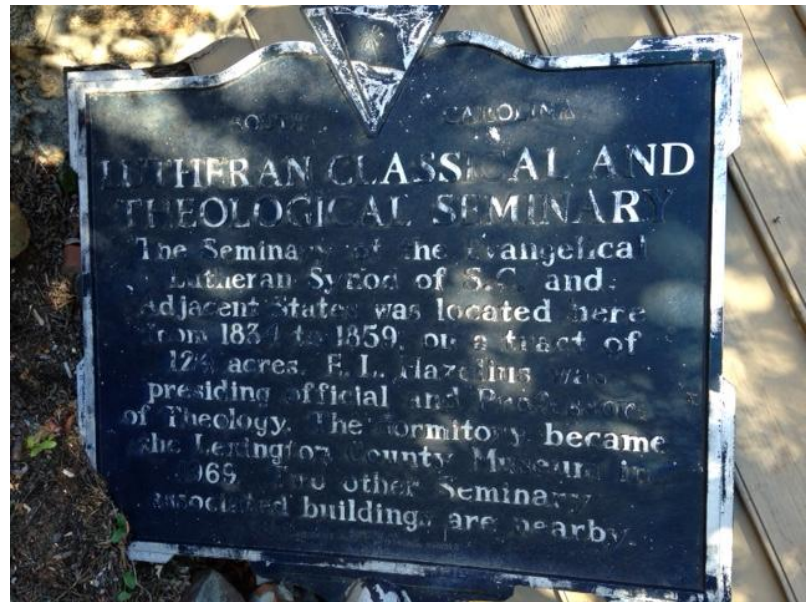
Town of Lexington Municipal Center (111 Maiden Lane)

Sponsorships are available

Call the museum at 803-359-8369 or email museum@lex-co.com to find out more about these events.

Lutheran Seminary Historic Marker to Be Unveiled at Open House

The new historical marker for the Southern Lutheran Seminary will be unveiled at the Lexington County Museum on December 14th at 2 pm during our annual Christmas Open House. The seminary, now in Columbia, was started in Pomaria, SC in 1831 but was moved to Lexington in 1832. It remained in Lexington until 1855. The Ernest Hazellus House (now on the museum complex) and the William Berly House (located at 121 Berly Street adjacent to the museum property) are the extant structures originally a part of the seminary while in Lexington. The original marker was destroyed by a tornado in 1994. That marker’s text featured a few errors as well. Thanks to the generosity of the Friends of the Lexington County Museum, the marker will be replaced so that this important part of Lexington history will be commemorated.



Destroyed Seminary Historic Marker at the Museum

Lexington County Museum

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*Gateway to
Yesterday*



We're on the Web!
www.lex-co.sc.gov/museum

The Lexington County Museum was started in 1970 to collect, preserve and present the history of Lexington County. After initially having only one historic house, the museum expanded and now has thirty historic structures over seven acres in downtown Lexington. Through exhibits in historic houses, the museum interprets everyday life in the town of Lexington and throughout Lexington County from the eighteenth century to the start of the Civil War. The museum offers guided tours to visitors for a small fee and has thirteen different hands-on programs for school groups free of charge by appointment. These programs attract schools from around the state and educate students about the history of Lexington County and about the everyday life of Lexington County residents in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Friends of the Lexington County Museum is a non-profit group founded in 1997 with an advisory board, officers, and a board of trustees representing all municipalities in Lexington County. Its mission is to enhance the Lexington County Museum through its duly appointed commission and to support, aid, and assist in the improvement and expansion of the Museum. The Friends group sponsors fund-raising projects to help further the Museum's valuable contribution to the county, including the project described below. The Friends group has raised over \$270,000 for the museum so far. To learn more about the Friends or to join, visit the museum's webpage (www.lex-co.sc.gov/museum).

Highlighted Artifact from the Museum's Collections

This issue we highlight a spindle back rocker settee, popularly called a Mammy bench in the South. It was so named because of its use as a rocker for the nurse and baby together. The infant could be cradled between a wooden guard and the back of the chair while the nurse/mother rocked and sewed or did other work at the same time. This particular specimen, made in the early 19th century, comes from Kershaw County. Come by the Museum and visit the Leaphart/ Harman house to see it in person!

